

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1                   1.     A method for failsoft headend operation in a complex,  
2     multiple location consumer communication and content delivery system, the system  
3     including a plurality of headend facilities, the system further including a central  
4     facility including a central database, and the system further including a distributed  
5     information technology (IT) architecture wherein a back office IT infrastructure is  
6     located at the central facility and wherein each headend facility includes a headend  
7     IT infrastructure, the method comprising:  
8                    providing a policy to a headend IT infrastructure, the policy defining  
9     policy limits for transactions that normally require real-time access to the central  
10    database; and  
11                   handling real-time transactions with the headend IT infrastructure,  
12    without real-time access to the central database, in accordance with the policy limits.
- 1                   2.     The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
2                    handling non-real-time transactions at least partially with the back  
3     office IT infrastructure.
- 1                   3.     The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
2                    handling real-time transactions at least partially with the back office  
3     IT infrastructure, with real-time access to the central database, for real-time  
4     transactions that fall outside of the policy limits.
- 1                   4.     The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
2                    determining an availability of access to the central database from the  
3     headend facility; and  
4                    in the event that access to the central database is unavailable, handling  
5     real-time transactions with the headend IT infrastructure, without real-time access  
6     to the central database, in accordance with the policy limits, thereby providing  
7     failsoft headend facility operation.

1                   5.       The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the headend  
2 facilities is for a cable television system.

1                   6.       The method of claim 1 wherein the central database is realized  
2 as a relational database.

1                   7.       The method of claim 1 wherein the central database is realized  
2 as an LDAP / X.500 directory.

1                   8.       A method for failsoft headend operation in a complex,  
2 multiple location consumer communication and content delivery system, the system  
3 including a plurality of headend facilities, the system further including a central  
4 facility including a central database, and the system further including a distributed  
5 information technology (IT) architecture wherein a back office IT infrastructure is  
6 located at the central facility and wherein each headend facility includes a headend  
7 IT infrastructure, the method comprising:

8                   for each headend facility, providing a policy to the associated  
9 headend IT infrastructure, the policy defining policy limits for transactions that  
10 normally require real-time access to the central database; and

11                   for each headend facility, in the event that access to the central  
12 database is unavailable, handling real-time transactions with the associated headend  
13 IT infrastructure, without real-time access to the central database, in accordance  
14 with the associated policy limits, thereby providing failsoft headend facility  
15 operation.

1                   9.       The method of claim 8 further comprising:

2                   for each headend facility, handling non-real-time transactions at least  
3 partially with the back office IT infrastructure.

1                   10.      The method of claim 8 further comprising:

2                   for each headend facility, handling real-time transactions at least  
3 partially with the back office IT infrastructure, with real-time access to the central  
4 database, for real-time transactions that fall outside of the associated policy limits.

1                   11.     The method of claim 8 wherein at least one of the headend  
2 facilities is for a cable television system.

1                   12.     The method of claim 8 wherein the system is a cable television  
2 network and the headend facilities for cable television systems.

1                   13.     The method of claim 8 wherein the central database is realized  
2 as a relational database.

1                   14.     The method of claim 8 wherein the central database is realized  
2 as an LDAP / X.500 directory.

1                   15.     A complex, multiple location consumer communication and  
2 content delivery system, the system comprising:  
3                   a plurality of headend facilities;  
4                   a central facility including a central database;  
5                   a distributed information technology (IT) architecture wherein a back  
6 office IT infrastructure is located at the central facility and wherein each headend  
7 facility includes a headend IT infrastructure; and  
8                   wherein at least one headend IT infrastructure is provided with a  
9 policy defining policy limits for transactions that normally require real-time access  
10 to the central database, and is programmed to handle real-time transactions, without  
11 real-time access to the central database, in accordance with the policy limits.

1                   16.     The system of claim 15 wherein the at least one headend IT  
2 infrastructure is programmed to handle non-real-time transactions at least partially  
3 with the back office IT infrastructure.

1                   17.     The system of claim 15 wherein the at least one headend IT  
2 infrastructure is programmed to handle real-time transactions at least partially with  
3 the back office IT infrastructure, with real-time access to the central database, for  
4 real-time transactions that fall outside of the policy limits.

1                   18.    The system of claim 15 wherein the at least one headend IT  
2   infrastructure is programmed to determine an availability of access to the central  
3   database, and in the event that access to the central database is unavailable, handle  
4   real-time transactions, without real-time access to the central database, in  
5   accordance with the policy limits, thereby providing failsoft headend facility  
6   operation.

1                   19.    The system of claim 15 wherein at least one of the headend  
2   facilities is for a cable television system.

1                   20.    The system of claim 15 wherein the central database is  
2   realized as a relational database.

1                   21.    The system of claim 15 wherein the central database is  
2   realized as an LDAP / X.500 directory.